



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

**TODD P. GRAVES**

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Contact Don Ledford, Public Affairs (816) 426-4220 400 East Ninth Street, Room 5510 Kansas City, MO 64106

[www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow)

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **SHOULD PATRIOT ACT REMAIN INTACT?**

### **YES: UNITED STATES MUST REMAIN VIGILANT**

**Note:** The following guest editorial by U.S. Attorney Todd P. Graves was published in *The Kansas City Star* on Aug. 27, 2003.

In the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, conventional wisdom held that the United States remained vulnerable to terrorists, and many people feared another catastrophic attack was imminent. But in the nearly two years since that fateful day, there has been no repeat attack.

That's because Americans are not willing to meekly sit back and wait for the terrorists to make the next move. Instead, our nation rallied to make necessary changes and provide needed resources to prevent terrorists from conducting another major strike on U.S. soil.

The Patriot Act has proven to be a highly effective tool in waging the war on terrorism. While most Americans support our nation's strategy in defending freedom from terrorism, a few vocal critics want to virtually disarm the troops by repealing critical elements of the Patriot Act.

The Patriot Act is a long overdue measure to close gaping holes in the government's ability to collect vital intelligence information on criminal terrorists. It removes the barriers preventing intelligence agents from sharing information with criminal investigators, and gives agencies the ability to better communicate and coordinate their efforts. It updates the law to accommodate modern technology, such as cell phones and the Internet. It allows law enforcement investigators to use the same tools against terrorists that we have used for years against drug dealers and mobsters.

As important as what the Patriot Act does, is what it does not do. It does not encroach on the Constitutional liberties or violate the civil rights of any American. It does not authorize secret

searches, and only allows delayed notification of searches in extremely narrow circumstances approved by a court. If investigators learn that a terrorist cell is planning an attack, and information can be obtained by searching a subject's house, it would be foolish to tip off the terrorists by providing immediate notification of the search. Under the Patriot Act, agents could conduct the search, arrest the terrorists, and prevent the attack before providing notice to the subject.

The Patriot Act does not allow the FBI to arbitrarily visit local libraries to check the reading habits of ordinary citizens. Business records — whether from a library or any other business — can be obtained in national security investigations only with the permission of a federal judge.

In fact, the Patriot Act requires judicial approval for any search or eavesdropping under its provisions — something not always required in criminal investigations. Delayed notification of searches and subpoenaed business records have long been used by law enforcement authorities in criminal cases. It only makes sense that the tools we already use against criminals should be turned against terrorists.

Thanks in large measure to the Patriot Act, the Justice Department is gathering detailed intelligence about terrorism in the United States. That has led to the destruction of four alleged terrorist cells; criminal charges against 255 individuals and 132 convictions and guilty pleas; more than 515 deportations; and the identification of thousands of suspected terrorists in the United States and elsewhere.

That's an astounding success story, but it comes with an ominous warning. In 1982, when the IRA failed its assassination attempt against Margaret Thatcher, it released a statement: "Today we were unlucky. But remember, we only have to get lucky once. You have to get lucky every day."

Space doesn't allow a more detailed explanation of how the Patriot Act is working to protect Americans from terrorist threats. Much more information is available at a new Web site, [www.lifeandliberty.gov](http://www.lifeandliberty.gov).

When the facts are provided in an open and honest discussion, I find that most people support the Patriot Act. For example, the Jackson County Legislature considered a resolution that implied provisions of the Patriot Act may be unconstitutional. When a representative from our office was allowed to discuss the issue with legislators, they realized that concern was unfounded and the resolution never came to a vote.

Despite the safety we have enjoyed in the United States for the past two years, America still has enemies who despise our freedom and envy our prosperity. These enemies remain patiently intent on terrorizing America's citizens, and so we must remain vigilant in protecting life and liberty.

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Additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at [www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow)